

# USC Chan

FALL 2014

USC MRS. T.H. CHAN DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

## FEATURED STORIES

### Investing in the Future

USC Trustee Ronnie C. Chan and wife Barbara make history with transformative gift

### On the Road Again

How driver rehabilitation is getting disabled motorists back into the driver's seat

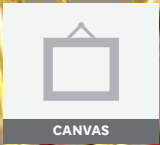
### Group Think

Introducing USC's interdisciplinary initiative to improve the lives of children with autism



Ranked *U.S. News & World Report's* top occupational therapy program





**20 MILLION REASONS TO CELEBRATE** | Streamers rained down on the crowd gathered at the front steps of the Center for the Health Professions building after it was announced that USC Trustee Ronnie C. Chan MBA '76 and his wife Barbara had made a historic \$20 million gift to the division, now known officially as the USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. "Do not thank me for this gift," Chan said. "It is my wife and I who have to thanks USC for the opportunities it has afforded me and my sons [both Adriel Chan '04 and Adley Chan '07, MA '08, OTD '12 are Trojans]." Read more about how the largest gift to an occupational therapy program will impact the division's future on pages 14-19.

Pictured (from left): USC President C. L. Max Nikias, Barbara Chan, Mrs. T.H. Chan, Ronnie C. Chan and Adley Chan, assistant clinical professor





## DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

I joined USC's faculty in 1976 and, looking back upon 38 years, I truly thought I had seen it all. I was wrong. While USC has indeed been fortunate enough to accomplish several significant "firsts" for the benefit of our entire profession, the unprecedented events of 2014 will surely transform our division, university and profession forever.

At a September fête on our Health Sciences Campus, I had the tremendous honor—alongside USC President C. L. Max Nikias and Dean Avishai Sadan of the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC—of helping publicly announce a \$20 million gift to endow and name the USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy!

This unparalleled gift—the largest in the history of our profession—from USC Trustee Ronnie C. Chan and his wife Barbara will improve the quality of life for countless people and communities across the world. It will help foster collaboration with colleagues in China and throughout the Pacific Rim. And it will make a major impact on the research and teaching of our scholars, the skills of our students and the health of the patients and families whom we serve. On pages 14–19, you can learn more about the Chan family's boundless generosity.

While this gift marks the beginning of a new era it is not necessarily the end of another. The quality you have come to expect from USC—thanks, in part, to your own efforts—remains as steadfast as ever, and the lineage of the Trojan Family is unbreakable. Yet we are so proud to bear a new name which I am sure you will come to know and love.

There is a Chinese proverb that roughly translates to "do good, reap good." To reap a gift of this magnitude validates the great work of thousands of Trojans—faculty, staff, students, friends and alumni alike—spanning many decades and places across the world. Moreover, it is a boost to even greater accomplishments that lie ahead.

Welcome back to the USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy! Fight On!

*Florence A. Clark*

**FLORENCE CLARK PHD '82, OTR/L, FAOTA**

**ASSOCIATE DEAN, CHAIR AND MRS. T.H. CHAN PROFESSOR OF  
OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY  
USC MRS T.H. CHAN DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE AND  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY  
HERMAN OSTROW SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY OF USC**



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New occupational therapy retreats offer healing for women who have suffered the loss of an unborn child.

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How occupational science plans to help minority teenagers better manage their diabetes.



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A tragic rock climbing accident left actor-comedian Jay Cramer partially paralyzed and dependent on ride-share programs. But now, thanks to the driver rehabilitation program at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, he's back behind the wheel and helping others do the same.

### *Associate Dean and Chair*

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### USC MRS. T.H. CHAN DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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USC University of  
Southern California





## I4

### Into A New Era

With a \$20 million gift, USC Trustee Ronnie C. Chan MBA '76 and wife Barbara help cement the division's legacy in the occupational therapy profession here and across the globe. We pull the curtain back on the history-making gift and what inspired it.

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### Healing the World

Assistant clinical professor Danny Park talks about USC Global Initiatives—a year-old program aiming to serve USC occupational therapy to a global audience—and what the Chan gift means for the program's designs on worldwide reach.

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### Group Think

With an interdisciplinary approach that brings in elements of occupational therapy, pediatrics, cinema, creative technologies and engineering, the proposed USC Center for Children and Families Living with Autism hopes to increase access to services and give voice to those living with autism spectrum disorders.

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### In Print

This issue's many published research articles and book chapters include two articles written by Alison M. Cogan in which the alumna and doctoral student makes the case for occupational therapy interventions for veterans.

## 28

### A Deeper Meaning

Director of admissions Liz Carley talks about finding the perfect career and what really drives her.

## CONTRIBUTORS

### LIZ CARLEY '04, MA '05, OTD '06



Seattle-native Liz Carley has extensive experience providing occupational therapy mental health services to at-risk, economically disadvantaged youth and their families. Before becoming assistant clinical professor and the division's director of admissions, Carley served as occupational therapy coordinator at a community-based mental health agency. In 2013, she co-authored a textbook chapter on adolescent mental health, her area of practice specialty. Carley shares what inspired her to occupational therapy in "A Deeper Meaning" on page 28.

### FLORENCE CLARK PHD '82,



#### OTR/L, FAOTA

A matriarch of occupational therapy, Clark is a widely published and noted academician. The associate dean and inaugural Mrs. T.H. Chan Professor was former vice president and president of AOTA. She was also a charter member of the AOTA Academy of Research, a board member of the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research and a recipient of the Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lectureship. On page 22, she shares some exciting developments regarding occupational therapy's role in an interdisciplinary effort to treat children with autism spectrum disorder.

### JANICE ROCKER OTD '14



Janice Rocker earned her master's degree in occupational therapy from Boston University in 1985 and her doctorate of occupational therapy degree from USC in 2014. She passed the Hand Therapy Certification examination when it was first offered in 1991 and has since lectured and published articles on hand and upper extremity rehabilitation topics. She currently coordinates the outpatient hand and upper extremity rehabilitation program at the Keck Medical Center of USC. On page 8, she shares the latest research buzz on mind-body interventions for hand therapy patients.

### JAMIE WETHERBE MA '04



Jamie Wetherbe left the Midwest for SoCal to pursue her master's in journalism at USC. Since graduating, she's spent most of her career at the *Los Angeles Times* covering everything from Banksy to the best bars in Vegas. She lives in Silver Lake with her wife Emily and their three mutts, Butch, Luke and Meow. Wetherbe interviewed Kylie Hanish whose real-life experience with stillborn was not only adapted into a TV movie but also has inspired her to start occupational therapy retreats for grieving mothers. Read all about it on the next page.

# Life After Stillborn

Alumna, adjunct professor and inspiration for a recent Lifetime movie, Kiley Hanish launches holistic retreats for mothers grieving from the devastating loss of stillborn.

BY JAMIE WETHERBE MA '04

There was a time in 2005 when Kiley Hanish MA '02, OTD '11 and her husband seemed to have the world at their feet.

The couple had found success professionally—Sean Hanish as a television commercial director, and Kiley Hanish had recently graduated from USC with her master's in occupational therapy.

The pair were also expecting their first child, and with the due date weeks away, they were deep into the excitement and anxiety of preparing for the baby's arrival.

Then, at about 35 weeks into her pregnancy, the couple were leveled by the devastating news that their son, Norbert, was stillborn.

Sean Hanish penned and directed the movie, *Return to Zero*, which premiered on Lifetime May 17, based on the couple's experience.

"It's watching the worst time of your life on film," said Kiley Hanish, an adjunct professor of clinical occupational therapy at USC. "I'm so private. It's pretty vulnerable."

The drama featured a star-studded cast—Minnie Driver, Paul Adelstein, Alfred Molina, Sarah Jones and Kathy Baker—and earned critical acclaim, including an Emmy nod for Minnie Driver, whose character, Maggie, was based on Hanish.

Despite the strong performances, Hollywood was reluctant to sign on to a film about this complex issue.

"People in this society don't talk about death in general, especially this type of death. It's such a difficult subject matter that no one wants to touch it," Hanish said. "The fact that the film was made and aired was a miracle."

*Return to Zero* was fueled in part by a strong social media drive with 130,000 users pledging to watch before Lifetime picked it up. Post-production was crowd-funded, and the closing credits included 700 baby names purchased to support the Kickstarter campaign.

"It became a movement not just a movie," Hanish explained. "All these people who feel isolated could be a part of a group ... this happens to a lot of people, unfortunately."

In the United States each year, about one in 160 pregnancies ends in a stillbirth (often defined as when a fetus dies at 20 or more weeks of pregnancy), which amounts to about 26,000 nationwide, according to the National Institutes of Health.

And like Maggie in *Return to Zero*, many mothers suffer in silence.

Following the film's success, Hanish, now a mother of three—including Norbert—has developed the first occupational therapy-based retreats for women who have suffered a stillbirth.

Launched in July, the *Return to Zero* retreats focus on holistic practices, including physical movement (like yoga) and nourishing food, connecting with your child and finding community.

"It's creating a very sacred space for people to work through their grief," said Hanish, as well as a safe place to share common fears.

"People will say, 'Every time my kid gets sick, I think they're going to die,'" she said. "That's not a normal thought, but for this group of people it's totally normal."

Retreat participants also pen the story of their child's death and life, even if he or she was only alive in the womb.

This OT-based tool allows the women to separate the trauma from the joy, Hanish explained.

Like *Return to Zero*, Hanish has found there's a need to share these stories. So far, she's led two retreats, and next year she has three scheduled for Seattle, Vermont and Australia. She recently went on sabbatical from USC to focus on her growing practice.

By lending her experiences to *Return to Zero* and the retreats, Hanish says she's found unexpected healing in her own life.

"I lost my son in 2005, but of the last 9 years, the most change has come in the last eight months," she said. "By talking and connecting with other people, trying to get out of my isolation, that's where the healing came."



Kiley Hanish MA '02, OTD '11



Neigh-masté—Horseback yoga is one of many healing activities that take place at the *Return to Zero* retreats.

Learn more about the Lifetime movie at [mylifetime.com/movies/return-to-zero](http://mylifetime.com/movies/return-to-zero).



UP AND COMING

# Calendar

## Alumni Day of SCservice

MARCH 2015

**OCT 31, 2014**

### 2014 USC Occupational Therapy Career Fair

Looking to recruit some of the best in the profession? Our annual career fair matches employers with master's and doctoral students from the USC Chan Division, ranked the top occupational therapy program in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*. Last year, more than 200 of the profession's brightest and most talented OT students attended.

*Details >> University Park Campus, Trousdale Parkway >> 10:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. >> More info: [chan.usc.edu/alumni/jobs/fair](http://chan.usc.edu/alumni/jobs/fair)*

**NOV 11, 2014**

### 2014 Veteran's Day Appreciation Reception

The division hosts its seventh annual reception in honor of those who have served. The light dinner, with a cash bar and live entertainment, is open to all USC students, staff, faculty and alumni who are veterans.

*Details >> Town and Gown, University Park Campus, 6 p.m.–8 p.m. >> More info: [chan.usc.edu/news-and-events/events](http://chan.usc.edu/news-and-events/events)*

**JAN 29-30, 2015**

### Patricia Buehler Distinguished Visitor Program

Hear from the latest recipients of the Patricia Buehler Award—*Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support (SCERTS) Model* co-founders Amy Laurent and Amy Wetherby—presented by the division to an established innovator in occupational therapy clinical care.

*Details >> USC Health Sciences Campus >> More info: [chan.usc.edu/news-and-events/events](http://chan.usc.edu/news-and-events/events)*

**MAR 21-22, 2015**

### OTAC 2015 Spring Symposium CE Conference

Learn side by side with California's top OT professionals at the annual OTAC CE conference in Anaheim, Calif.

*Details >> Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel and Resort, 1717 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, Calif. >> More info: [otaonline.org/index.php/spring-symposium](http://otaonline.org/index.php/spring-symposium)*

**MARCH 2015**

### USC 2015 Alumni Day of SCservice

Give back to your local communities by joining a USC alumni club, chapter or other affiliated group in a day of volunteer "SCservice." Last year's volunteer service sites included women's shelters, senior centers and local schools and food banks.

*Find your local organized service sites at [alumnigroups.usc.edu/scservice](http://alumnigroups.usc.edu/scservice).*

**APR 18, 2015**

### USC Trojan Family Reception at the 2015 AOTA Annual Conference and Expo

Attending this year's AOTA Annual Conference? Save the date to kick back and connect with USC alumni at the Trojan Family reception at the AOTA Annual Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

*Details >> Location TBD >> More info: [aota.org/conference](http://aota.org/conference)*





# Designing a REAL Strategy for Managing Diabetes

BY HOPE HAMASHIGE

Beth Pyatak was still a graduate student at the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, conducting research at LAC+USC Medical Center, when she began to understand why young people with diabetes—and particularly young minority patients—had more trouble than other patients controlling their disease’s symptoms.

“When I was working at LAC+USC, my role was to interview them to get information about their challenges,” explained Pyatak ’02, MA ’04, PhD ’10, now an assistant professor. “Some were taking care of younger siblings while their parents worked, one young woman was taking care of her mother after [the mother’s] leg was amputated.”

Pyatak discovered that serious life stressors combined with fewer resources compounded with the demands of work or school or both often meant that managing diabetes was not always a top priority for this group. “They tend to have more stressors and fewer resources, which makes things like regular doctor visits more difficult,” she said.

That experience put Pyatak on a path to develop a new type of disease management program for young minority patients with both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes that she hopes will help keep them on track. She was recently awarded a \$460,000 career development grant from the National Institutes of Health to put that program to the test.

Pyatak will soon begin enrolling patients in the diabetes self-management program she designed, which she has dubbed the *Resilient, Empowered, Active Living with Diabetes (REAL) Interventions*. REAL involves undergoing an in-depth needs assessment to create an individually tailored, self-management strategy.

The grant will fund a six-month study of her REAL Interventions during which 40 participants will go through the REAL Interventions, and another 40 participants will act as a control group. Several data collectors will assess glycemic control, self-care behaviors and quality of life outcomes for all participants.

Pyatak noted that the needs of this group, who are transitioning



Beth Pyatak ’02, MA ’04, PhD ’10

from pediatric to adult care, are complex. While lack of resources and additional life stressors are part of the problem, Pyatak said they also share similarities to other young adults with chronic disease.

Many young people with chronic disease tire of the ongoing management of their health and let it lapse, an experience known as disease burn-out. It is also more common for young adults to engage in risk-taking behavior when it comes to their health. They are often more willing to participate in activities that may undermine their condition, she said.

In addition, the need for better interventions has grown as the numbers of older teens and young adults from underserved communities with Type 2 diabetes has risen in recent years. Type 2 diabetics, she explains, are less likely to manage their condition well because, unlike Type 1 diabetics, they can more easily ignore their symptoms.

“A lot of them will continue to eat foods they know they shouldn’t because they don’t suffer the consequences right away,” she explained, noting that Type 1 diabetics need regular insulin injections to avoid serious complications. “Even if they know that what they are doing might cause life-threatening complications later, some of them will ignore that until they have to face it.”

Pyatak has already completed a very small study of the REAL Interventions involving eight young, minority patients with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. That research demonstrated that the interventions were feasible to implement and had potential to produce positive change in self-care and glycemic control.

Anne Peters, professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and director of the diabetes management program at the Roybal Comprehensive Health Center says Pyatak’s study is likely to provide insights into effective strategies to improve diabetes self-management among a population that needs it.

“I feel it has potential to enhance health and well-being among an often overlooked population at significant risk for poor health outcomes,” Peters says.





YOUR WORLD

# News Briefs

Lectures, grants, awards—There's always so much going on at the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. Keep your finger on the pulse with these division news briefs.

## PASSING RATES



### One-hundred percent passing rate for certification examination

Each of the 113 Trojan alumni who took the

National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy certification examination during 2013 passed, giving USC the highest pass rate among all entry-level master's programs in California for the year. "I am so ecstatic and proud about this news," said Julie McLaughlin Gray, associate clinical professor and director of the professional program at the USC Chan Division. "I have no doubts that this pass rate can be attributed, at least in part, to our new curriculum design in which students concentrate on one practice area at a time during their courses and have extensive fieldwork and leadership experiences."

## GIFTS



### Alumna establishes fund for AOTA conference-bound students

Michele Berro MA '88 has donated \$25,000 to the

USC Chan Division to support student attendance at the American Occupational Therapy Association's National Conference and Expo. The gift, known as the Michele Berro Fund, will send nearly 30 students to the world's largest gathering of occupational therapists over the next five years, helping them pay for travel, accommodations and registration fees. "I believe attending conference helped to instill in me a sense of tremendous pride in the awesomeness of our profession and the remarkable difference we can make in the quality of life for those that we serve," Berro said. "It is my sincere hope that scholarship recipients will get as hooked as I did." The AOTA 95th annual National Conference and Expo will take place April 16–19, 2015 in Nashville, Tenn.

## SERVICE



### Chan student named Albert Schweitzer fellow

Alyssa Concha MA '14 is one of 15 L.A. graduate

students to receive a 2014–2015 Albert Schweitzer Fellowship. The distinction gives fellows an opportunity to partner with a community-based organization to develop and implement a service project. Throughout the next year, Concha will be partnering with Esperanza Community Housing Corporation, a South Los Angeles-based advocacy group, to improve training resources for *promotores de salud* [health promoters]. Her 200-hour service project's goal is to better equip *promotores* as they go out into the community, teaching residents about such issues as lead poisoning prevention, allergies and asthma, prenatal care and access to health services.

## AWARDS



### Two division faculty members earn year-end awards

Assistant clinical professors Ashley Halle

and Celso Delgado each received year-end awards in recognition of their dedication to students and the community. Halle earned an Extraordinary Engagement Award from USC Civic Engagement. The award recognizes her outstanding contribution to the development, sustainment and success of the Interprofessional Geriatrics Curriculum, an interdisciplinary education program for students and older adults delivered in a local independent-living facility. Delgado received the 2014 Professor of Color Recognition Award for outstanding teaching and mentoring skills.

## ACADEMIC REVIEWS



### Results from academic review processes affirm excellence

During the spring 2014

semester, the division hosted on-site reviewers from the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), the profession's educational accreditation organization, and from USC's University Committee on Academic Review (UCAR), the university's review body, which ensures accountability for all academic programs. Results from both processes confirmed the academic excellence of the USC Chan Division, as the ACOTE granted USC's entry-level master's program full accreditation status for 10 years. The UCAR commended the division's clinical and research doctorate degree programs and "rock-solid foundation" for interdisciplinary collaborations. "Academic reviews are an integral part of ensuring our programs are at the leading edge, and these results are a testament to the high quality of the work we do here every day," said Associate Dean and Mrs. T.H. Chan Professor of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy Florence Clark.

## SCHOLARSHIPS



### Chan student wins one of three AOTA scholarships

Loralei Bingamon MA

'16 was named one of three recipients of the American Occupational Therapy Association's E. K. Wise Scholarship for the 2014–2015 academic year. Bingamon will receive a \$2,500 scholarship to support her studies. Previously known as the AOTA E. K. Wise Loan Program, the scholarship fund was established in the 1960s through the bequest of Elizabeth K. Wise to support women pursuing an entry-level degree in occupational therapy. The focus of the scholarship is to support students from diverse backgrounds who meet E. K. Wise's and AOTA's objectives of developing a workforce to meet society's diverse occupational needs in underserved areas or communities.

# Research Buzz

## GAME CHANGER: SONOGRAPHY AND MIND-BODY TECHNIQUES COULD REVOLUTIONIZE THE WAY WE PRACTICE HAND REHABILITATION

BY JANICE ROCKER OTD '14

INSTRUCTOR OF CLINICAL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



I have the perfect job: I treat people with hand and upper-extremity injuries in an outpatient hospital setting here at USC. Because occupational therapists at the Keck Medical Center of USC hold appointments as faculty members, I also have allotted time during my busy day to engage in cutting-edge research aimed to validate occupational therapy's role in treating people holistically.

The *Effects of Mind-Body Interventions on Stress, Anxiety and Pain in Hand Therapy Patients* research study is a great example of collaboration between clinicians and researchers. The study, which is funded by the American Society of Hand Therapists, is led by principal investigator Shawn C. Roll, an assistant professor who is also director of the Musculoskeletal Sonography & Occupational Performance Laboratory. Clinical Instructor Aimee Aguillon, my colleague in the hand therapy clinic, and David S. Black, assistant professor of preventive medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, are also project collaborators.

Together we are studying the effects of two different mind-body treatments for hand rehabilitation in people with orthopedic injuries. The first treatment uses sonography to allow participants to view their own non-injured tendons, muscles and bones, both while stationary and during functional grasping and pinching. For comparison, we then view the affected side with all its potential complications, such as edema, scar tissue and hardware like plates and screws—essentially a means of visual biofeedback for the patient. Of course, we help educate participants about what exactly is happening in their own injured hand, as compared to the unaffected hand.

The second treatment emphasizes mindfulness during therapeutic exercises, with a pre-recorded audio tape that guides participants to complete a body scan and mental exercises. Mindfulness is a mind-body technique with a goal of increasing an individual's awareness and attention to things in the present moment in a non-judging manner. In our study, the goal of the mindfulness training is to provide a means for clients to become more aware of their body structures and reduce overall pain and anxiety through non-judging awareness of their injury.

While providing our normal standard of care treatment, we are measuring the effects of these two mind-body treatments with salivary cortisol swabs—since cortisol is released as a response to stress—and standardized pain and anxiety questionnaires. This will help us to understand how each of the mind-body interventions—as well as standard care—impact stress, anxiety and pain. This will also help us determine how best to capture standardized, reliable and valid data as we develop our intervention research. Our long-term goal is to determine how to integrate these mind-body treatments into standard hand therapy practice to enhance functional outcomes and help clients get better faster.

As occupational therapists we work with the whole person, so it makes sense that we want our clients to know more precisely what is happening in their hand as they heal. Mindfulness techniques have been beneficial in other areas of practice to improve health, and we believe the education and biofeedback provided by real-time sonography can be more effective than just referencing anatomical pictures of the hand from textbooks—especially since it's the patient's own hand.

As a clinician, it is exciting to be part of this cutting-edge research while learning about mindfulness interventions and how to use the sonography. In addition to the benefits for our clients, we have found that we can use the sonography to better recognize hand and forearm tissues and observe how they respond to motion and functional use. This has improved our clinical reasoning, and we believe it will enhance the quality of care for our clients.

Our research team has presented sonography seminars to the Hand Therapy Society of Greater Los Angeles and at the national conferences of the American Occupational Therapy Association and the American Society of Hand Therapists. We have begun to hear a buzz of interest throughout the community of hand therapy practitioners, and I believe that the use of mindfulness techniques and sonographic imaging can revolutionize the way we practice hand rehabilitation. What an exciting time to be an occupational therapist!





# Social Media

**\$114**

**MILLION DOLLARS RAISED  
FOR ALS RESEARCH**

ONE ICE BUCKET = 1 MILLION 

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS ON ICE

Social media met social activism this summer as thousands—including celebrities, pro athletes and at least one former president—took the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. The premise was simple: When challenged, donate \$100 to the ALS Association or dump ice cold water over your head; most did both, amounting to \$114 million raised for research on Lou Gehrig's and more than a few soaked heads. After being challenged by the Washington University Occupational Therapy Program, the USC Chan Division bravely answered the call, but not before nominating the occupational therapy programs at Thomas Jefferson, New York and Columbia universities to follow suit. "And now we're going to get wet," Associate Dean Florence Clark says, as one "bucket" after another of cold water—19 in all—was poured over division faculty and staff heads. Check out the video here: [tinyurl.com/uscoticebucket](http://tinyurl.com/uscoticebucket)



## SURF'S UP

It's been a busy summer for Carly Rogers MA '04, OTD '11. Not only did the alumna and surfer chick get to deliver a TEDxUCLA talk on the healing properties of riding the waves, which can be seen at [tinyurl.com/surftherapy](http://tinyurl.com/surftherapy), she also co-authored a feasibility study on ocean therapy for the July/August 2014 issue of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. In the article, Rogers determined that sports-oriented occupational therapy intervention—such as surfing—does indeed show promise as a supplemental mental health treatment for veterans suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder and depression. Rogers also made waves in the summer issue of *Trojan Family Magazine*: [tinyurl.com/tfmsurftherapy](http://tinyurl.com/tfmsurftherapy)



## ALUMNA IN THE NEWS

"She [has] such a great, strong-willed personality," said Kristin Crozier MA '11. "She loves to do everything by herself." The division alumna was quoted in a June 2014 *New York Daily News* article, describing Patience Boyd, who at 2 years old, had been shot in the head by a stray bullet in her Bronx neighborhood. Given a dire prognosis, Patience has defied all odds. After graduating from a preschool program at YAI, a network of agencies assisting people with disabilities, earlier this summer, Patience is headed to kindergarten. Crozier works at YAI as a pediatric occupational therapist. Read Patience's heartwarming recovery tale here: [tinyurl.com/patiencecovery](http://tinyurl.com/patiencecovery)



## DIVISION ON INSTAGRAM

Stay connected to your alma mater. Find us on the app at [@USCChanOSOT](https://www.instagram.com/uscchanosot) or online at [instagram.com/uscchanosot](https://www.instagram.com/uscchanosot)



A group of six young women are gathered inside a vehicle, looking out the window with smiles. The woman in the foreground has brown hair and wears glasses and a grey shirt. Behind her, several other women with long dark hair are visible, some wearing blue shirts and others patterned scarves. The interior of the vehicle, including the window frame and a red bag, is partially visible.

# ON THE ROAD AGAIN

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A hiking accident might have left actor-comedian Jay Cramer partially paralyzed, but he's not stuck in neutral, thanks to the OT Driver Rehabilitation Program at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center.

BY YASMINE PEZESHKPOUR MCM '17





PHOTO BY JOHN SKALICKY

## Lying there facedown in the cool canyon water, Jay Cramer didn't quite feel right.

It's not like falling from the boulder's face into the hip-deep water below was a new experience. He had taken spills twice before as he and his buddies slowly traversed the rocky landscape in Malibu Canyon that Tuesday morning.

But something felt different about this fall. When Cramer, then 30 years old, tried to roll over on his back, he discovered he couldn't. His arms and legs no longer felt like they were his own.

"Your whole life changes in the blink of an eye," Cramer says.

It was supposed to be a day of celebration. Cramer, an actor-comedian who had moved to Los Angeles seven years earlier to pursue stardom, had found out he was a semifinalist to be a contestant on *Survivor*. In anticipation of the adventure ahead, he and his friends had set out to get him prepared for a spot on the CBS reality show with a bouldering excursion. Bouldering is a style of rock climbing where climbers do not wear safety harnesses because they are typically no more than 20 feet off the ground.

It hadn't been the distance he fell that had caused Cramer's immobility, though. "As I pushed off the boulder, I tried to do a backwards double jack knife off the rock," Cramer says. That push-off caused him to hit his head on a rock in the middle of the water. The impact immediately shattered his fifth cervical vertebrae, the corresponding nerves of which control arm and hand movement.

Cramer was airlifted from the canyon and underwent a grueling, nine-and-a-half-hour surgery to repair the damage to his body from the fall. When he awoke, he was surprised to see 14 of his friends had stayed the night at the hospital, anxiously awaiting any updates on his condition. Unable to speak, Cramer indicated to his visitors he was OK.

"I showed them through my eyes that I was exactly the same guy as always," Cramer says. "But now things are just going to be a little bit different."

Following surgery, Cramer was in intensive care for 41 days before being released to re-learn the skills necessary to get back to the life he had once known. "It wasn't easy for me," says the independent-minded Cramer. "I had to have help all the time, and I just wanted to get up and do things on my own."

Now 39, Cramer gets around with the help of a power wheelchair and a retired service dog named Goliath.

Just a few months after surgery, Cramer was cleared to begin rehabilitation at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. "Once you're ready for therapy, they really throw you in the mix," he says. "That means neck brace off, sitting upright in your wheelchair for eight hours and re-learning day-to-day tasks."

During his time at Rancho, the affable Cramer made fast friends by falling back on his characteristic humor during tough times.

"I would meet people and tell them my story—of course adding a little humorous spin on it—and they would tell me how funny I was and that I should try out stand-up comedy," Cramer says. "I had been an actor for years. I had done my share of sketch comedy and improv, but I never had the guts to try stand-up until I broke my neck."

Exactly four months to the day after his accident, Jay landed his first stand-up comedy gig, and it was a hit. The experience and positive audience feedback inspired him to sign up to do even more stage appearances, which required him to travel from Burbank, Calif., to Hollywood, Calif., two to three times a week. It's one thing for an actor to sit in traffic every day traveling to appearances, but quite another



Sandra Okada '79, MSG '88, Jay Cramer and "Goliath"

when you have to depend on others to get you there on time.

"I couldn't just get up and go when I wanted since I couldn't drive," says Cramer, who would take the Access Paratransit—a ride-share program for people with disabilities—to Hollywood. "It's great for getting around," he says, "but very limiting for someone like me who was coming and going to auditions, work and other activities throughout my day."

While Cramer was very grateful for the Access van, his dependence on it often made him miss stage time or kept him waiting for rides long after the shows. One day while waiting for a ride, his buddy suggested Cramer should get his own car. Cramer knew that if he wanted to continue to pursue his passion he would need to get his own car to regain the freedom of coming and going at his own will.

With the help of several grants, Cramer was able to save enough for the down payment on a navy blue Dodge Caravan.

For someone with a disability to drive safely, a vehicle often has to be outfitted with wheelchair lifts, hand accelerators and brakes or pedal extensions—all dependent upon the driver's condition. It means learning a whole new skill set. For example, someone with a right foot amputation due to diabetic neuropathy must learn to brake and accelerate with their left foot. For someone who has lost use of both legs—like Cramer—it can mean learning to accelerate and brake with your hands.

California's Department of Motor Vehicles advises people with disabilities to undergo proper training before getting behind the wheel. DMV specialists conduct interviews and screening evaluations before giving clearance for an on-road and written exam. The process has to be repeated every five years.

To prepare for his driving test, Cramer decided to connect with Sandra Okada '79, MSG '88, CDRS, a certified driver rehabilitation



specialist. Okada has been working at Rancho for the past 25 years, 18 of which she has spent with the OT Driver Rehabilitation Program. She understands the need for the driver rehabilitation program to get people back on the road.

“It’s especially difficult in a city like Los Angeles not to have a car,” Okada says. “We hope that in a way the program gives our clients a sense of freedom and independence back.”

The driver evaluation and training program has been assisting patients in becoming safe drivers since 1957. The program offers a pre-driving screening and education, behind-the-wheel courses and assistance with DMV preparation, as well as with vehicle modification evaluations.

Would-be drivers can gain valuable experience behind the wheel of the program’s driving simulator, which allows users a video-game type of immersive experience using some of the typical car modifications made for a handicapped driver. With three simulated screens facing them in wrap-around fashion, drivers are challenged by adverse weather conditions like rain and fog and can choose various surfaces like mountain roads and freeways to improve their skills. The experience increases their confidence behind the wheel without presenting any of the associated risks of an actual on-road encounter.

Once they get comfortable with the simulator experience, they hit the roads around Rancho with occupational therapists in the car behind them, noting further adjustments necessary for a safe driving experience.

Every year, Rancho partners with the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, where Okada also teaches the course to candidates of the master’s in occupational therapy degree. The course, titled Adult Physical Rehabilitation Practice Immersion, allows the students to learn about the driving rehabilitation program and the assistive technologies at the Center for Applied Rehabilitation Technology.

“Learning about spinal cord injury and driving an adapted van is not really something students can appreciate until they hear Jay’s story and see him get into and out of his van with his controls, his adaptations,” Okada says. “It really makes the learning experience come to life.”

With Okada’s help, Cramer was able to receive his driver’s license in 2008, nearly three years after his accident. “It was a freeing experience,” he says. “Someone in the program once told me a van is as important, if not more, as the wheelchair, and I couldn’t agree more.”

Cramer was such a valuable asset to the Rancho culture that he now serves as a peer mentor supervisor and life coach for the Rancho Know Barriers and Peer Mentor Program. “I tell patients here that it’s OK to feel sad,” he says. “But the key is getting past it because there is much more life to live. It’s important for me to help people get through that as others did for me.”

It is also in this role that he assists Okada in driver demonstrations for students and clients.

Cramer still manages to pursue his talents in acting. He recently made an appearance on the prime time television show, *Grey’s Anatomy*. “I always thought about being a doctor, but my grades in acting class were always higher than in science,” he jokes. “In a way the role on *Grey’s Anatomy* allowed me to experience the best of both worlds.”

Nine years after the accident, Cramer says he wouldn’t change a thing. “It has been the best thing that ever happened to me,” he says. “You gain a tremendous amount of perspective on who you are, what you’re capable of and you learn what you really want out of life.”



## FAST TRACK

### HOW THE DRIVER REHABILITATION PROGRAM GETS DISABLED DRIVERS BACK INTO THE DRIVER’S SEAT:

#### 1. GROUP TRAINING

The program prepares prospective drivers with group trainings explaining the process in California for getting a driver’s license.

#### 2. SIMULATED DRIVING

Certified driver rehabilitation specialists work with individuals using a driving simulator to get motorists comfortable behind the wheel.

#### 3. HITTING THE ROAD

The driver rehabilitation specialists assesses the driver’s skills on roads around Rancho in a vehicle outfitted for a disabled driver.

#### 4. TAKING THE DMV TEST

The DMV assessment includes in-person interviews as well as written and road tests and must be repeated every five years for license renewal.



It can take up to six one-hour sessions to teach someone with lower-extremity paralysis from a spinal cord injury to learn to use hand controls to brake and accelerate, according to Okada.





A large crowd of people is visible in the background, many holding up smartphones to take photos. In the foreground, a hand is raised, making a peace sign (V-sign). The hand is wearing a white shirt cuff and a dark suit sleeve. The background is slightly out of focus, emphasizing the hand and the text.

# INTO A NEW ERA

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With their \$20 million gift to the division,  
USC Trustee Ronnie C. Chan and wife Barbara  
make history and cement a legacy.

BY MIKE MCNULTY MA '09, OTD '10

PHOTO BY JOHN SKALICKY

The universe works in mysterious ways. That was the message—equal parts gratitude and awe—delivered by Associate Dean Florence Clark at a confidential gathering of division leaders in early August. A cryptic email summoned select faculty members to this off-the-record meeting and as the room filled, hushed speculations swirled. Yet the plastic flutes of champagne being passed around—not the typical beverage for a weekday business meeting—signaled the bombshell announcement ahead.

“What I am about to tell you, you can call it fate, call it good karma or call it divine intervention,” Clark said, as she brought the meeting to order. “Whatever you call it, it is nothing short of a miracle, a dream come true.”

With her husband, senior computer consultant John Wolcott, smiling beside her and with tears welling in her eyes, Clark broke the suspense: A \$20-million gift agreement had been reached to name and endow the division for all time.

Gasps of disbelief crescendoed into unanimous applause. Institutional naming gifts, which guarantee a program’s existence for all time, are unheard of within occupational science and occupational therapy. They are indeed so rare that no occupational therapy educational program had ever been previously named. The implication of the announcement settled upon the room: USC was realizing another accomplishment in a long line of firsts, the benefits of which would one day ripple throughout the profession and across the world. The long-impossible dream to permanently endow the division was coming true.

### An Accident, An Awakening

Occupational therapy is a career choice rarely made lightly. Just ask any therapist. More often than not, you will hear a story forged in a crucible of injury, illness and trauma on one hand, and recovery, healing and hope on the other.

Ten years ago, assistant clinical professor Adley Chan ’07, MA ’08, OTD ’12 was an undergraduate sophomore student at USC when he received an email that, in retrospect, changed the trajectory of his entire life. The message notified Chan that a good friend who was traveling through Louisiana was injured in an automobile accident, had sustained a traumatic brain injury and was currently in a severe coma. As days turned into weeks, Chan decided to visit the friend’s family to do whatever possible to help console them. But when he arrived at the hospital, Chan was greeted with an incredible surprise: The friend had awoke from the coma. At the hospital Chan watched intently as occupational therapists began the long process of physical and cognitive rehabilitation.

After he returned to campus in Los Angeles, Chan was in for another surprise. At the beginning of his Monday morning class, an







*“Don’t thank me for the gift; it is my wife and I,  
my family, that have to thank USC for giving us  
that tremendous opportunity and privilege.”*

*—Ronnie C. Chan MBA ’76 (not pictured)*

Pictured (from left): Barbara Chan, Mrs. T.H. Chan and  
Adley Chan, assistant clinical professor

PHOTO BY JOHN SKALICKY

occupational therapy student ambassador gave a brief presentation about the profession and the undergraduate major at USC. The following semester Chan knew he had to enroll in the undergraduate course, *OT 250: Introduction to Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy*. What felt right—if only as moral support for a rehabilitating friend—grew into something more.

“I attended every class of OT 250, did all the readings and homework and I actually enjoyed it,” Chan recalls with a smile. “I thought, ‘maybe there’s something to this occupational therapy after all.’”

This was more than coincidence; it seemed like a calling. Having witnessed the impact of such a catastrophic condition on a friend, Chan felt called upon to help others through similar circumstances. He soon declared occupational therapy his undergraduate major and continued at USC to earn both his master’s and clinical doctorate degrees in occupational therapy.

A decade later, Chan’s friend is now back living life to its fullest, happily married with three children and able to work full-time. Such a recovery could not have been fully possible without occupational therapy.



USC PHOTO/GUS RUELAS



## A LASTING IMPACT

### HOW THE CHANS’ GENEROSITY IS SET TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION ON THE DIVISION AND THE PROFESSION.

1. The \$20-million gift provides a financial endowment to keep the division funded in perpetuity.

The gift also renames the division, now officially known as the USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy.

2. It also establishes and endows the Mrs. T.H.

Chan Professorship in Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. Associate Dean and occupational therapy icon Florence Clark has been named the professorship’s first holder.

3. Finally, the gift extends the division’s global reach by establishing a partnership with a top Chinese university to create a graduate-level OT program in China.

### A Thoroughly Trojan Family

The phrase Trojan Family is often used as a metaphor for USC’s extensive and devoted alumni network. Quite literally, Adley Chan belongs to another Trojan family—his older brother Adriel earned a bachelor’s degree from USC in 2004 and his father Ronnie C. Chan earned his MBA degree from USC in 1976.

In the decades since, the elder Chan built his family’s Hong Kong-based business into a thriving multinational corporation. He became the chairman of Hang Lung Group Limited and its subsidiary Hang Lung Properties Limited which, with its wide-ranging portfolio of retail, commercial and residential properties, stands among Hong Kong’s leading property companies. He also co-founded the Morningside Group, a private investment firm that owns and manages industrial and service companies throughout the United States and Asia. In 1995, former USC President Steven Sample welcomed Chan to the USC Board of Trustees and later honored him with the 2009 Asa V. Call Achievement Award, USC’s most prestigious alumni award.

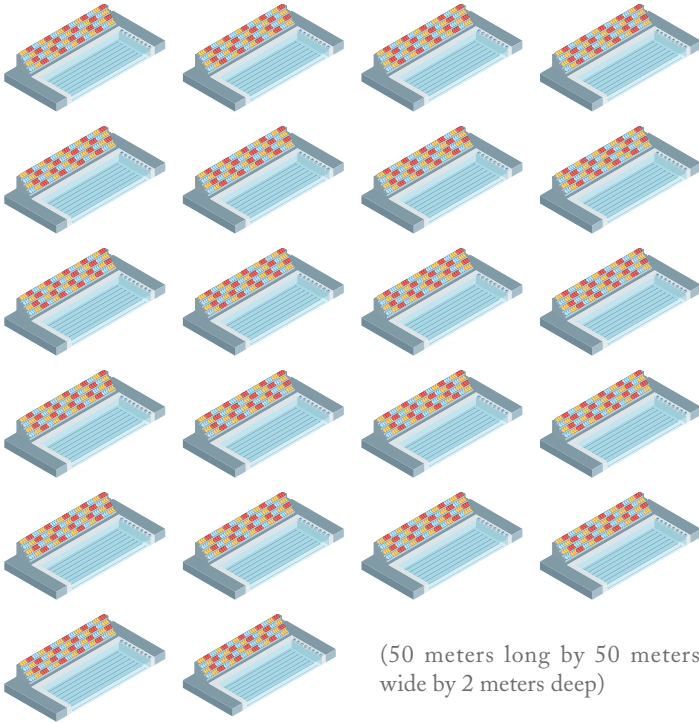
As the youngest Chan progressed through years of occupational therapy education, the elder Chan and his wife Barbara grew to become good friends with Clark and Wolcott. And with their resolute commitment to philanthropic endeavors in partnership with health and education institutions throughout the world, the Chan family would soon add another generous act to their names.



# RUNNING THE NUMBERS

## PUTTING THE \$20-MILLION GIFT INTO AN OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PERSPECTIVE

**20** MILLION 3-INCH BALLS WOULD FILL 21.95 OLYMPIC-SIZED SWIMMING POOLS



USING 20 MILLION POUNDS OF THERA-PUTTY, A HIGHLY MOTIVATED SCULPTOR WOULD BE ABLE TO BUILD 10,000 LIFE-SIZED TOMMY TROJAN STATUES.

(Tommy packs 2,000 pounds into his lean bronze frame).

**10,000**



**THE \$20 MILLION CHAN GIFT WILL FUND THE DIVISION INTO PERPETUITY. BUT HOW DOES THAT MONEY LITERALLY LAST FOREVER?**

### THE PRINCIPAL

Depending on the terms of agreement, all or part of the initial gift amount (the principal) is invested by USC into stocks, bonds and real estate.

### PRINCIPAL GROWTH

Because the principal is untouched by the division while being strategically invested by USC, it has the opportunity to grow forever.

### INTEREST INCOME

The division uses only the interest income each year to activate current opportunities that enhance the division.

At a September celebration hosted on the USC Health Sciences Campus, USC President C. L. Max Nikias made the announcement official: Ronnie and Barbara Chan committed \$20 million to the division of occupational science and occupational therapy, the first naming gift and largest ever made to any occupational therapy program in the history of the field.

It was the second major gift the Chans had made to a U.S. university in as many weeks, with Chan's Morningside Foundation making a substantial gift to Harvard's School of Public Health in honor of patriarch Mr. T.H. Chan on Sept. 8.

The USC gift was made in honor of the Chan family's matriarch, Mrs. T.H. Chan, who was trained as a nurse in Northern China during the mid-20th century. The gift established an endowment in perpetuity and named the division the USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy.

"This is a special day for USC, as we celebrate our half-century-long connection with this singular family and the professional commitment of its venerable matriarch," Nikias said. "USC's extraordinary presence in the Pacific Rim is due in no small measure to Ronnie's years of tactical work and gracious outreach."

Nikias then introduced Ronnie Chan, who was treated to a standing ovation by the standing-room-only crowd as he took the podium.

"Let's get one thing right," Ronnie Chan said. "Don't thank me for the gift—it is my wife and I, my family, that have to thank USC for giving us that tremendous opportunity and privilege."

He also shared a family story that resonates with many who have chosen a career in occupational therapy. When Mrs. T.H. Chan graduated from nursing school in Northern China she had an opportunity to enter medical school. But to the surprise of her family, she didn't. The reason? "She felt that she [could] do more good, and help people more directly," Chan said, "as a nurse rather than as a medical doctor."

## Globally Connected

The gift will also extend the division's international reach thanks to the USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Occupational Therapy China Initiative. This focused, short-term initiative will establish a partnership between the division and a top Chinese university to develop a graduate program in occupational therapy in China. In addition, the gift endows the Mrs. T.H. Chan Professorship in Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. Florence Clark will be installed as the first holder of the professorship.

"Endowed chairs help USC recruit and retain the very best faculty," said Elizabeth Garrett, USC provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, at an intimate October celebration of the Chan's gift at New York City's Carlyle Hotel. "Dr. Clark, along with the other clinician-scientists in USC's occupational therapy programs—Dr. Chan included—are committed to improving quality of life for people across our communities."

One month after the fanfare of the announcement festivities, Clark was asked to reflect on the long-term implications of the historic gift. "I really do believe that the universe works in mysterious ways, and that in the infinite wisdom of the cosmos, this gift was just somehow meant to be," Clark said. "But I don't think there is any mystery as to the fact that it will improve the lives of so many people across the world."



# HEALING THE WORLD

How the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy aims to expand its reach far beyond U.S. borders to foster international collaborations and exchange programs.

BY JAMIE WETHERBE MA '04

Occupational therapy varies vastly from country to country: In Japan and Korea, OT mainly treats people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, while in Hong Kong occupational therapists focus on the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases.

"OT responds to the unique health needs of different countries, and we have a lot to learn from each other," says Danny Park MA '09, OTD '10, an assistant clinical professor of occupational therapy at USC.

Park also heads the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy Global Initiatives, a new program that serves up OT to a global audience.

Launched in the fall of 2013, Global Initiatives offers students a unique perspective on the profession through international exchange programs, while helping to firmly secure USC's spot as the top-ranked OT program in the world.

Global Initiatives will soon be going even more global: In September, USC announced a \$20 million gift from Trustee Ronnie C. Chan MBA '76 in support of its occupational therapy program.

The gift will permanently endow the division, which will be known as the USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, and establish a China initiative to develop a graduate-level OT program in partnership with a yet-to-be named university.

"It's a really exciting time," says Park, who recently represented the program during a goodwill ambassador tour through Asia and at Japan's World Federation of Occupational Therapists.

We spoke with Park to learn about what's in the works for Global Initiatives at USC and around the world. These are excerpts from that conversation:

**What was the inspiration behind the division's new Global Initiatives program?**

Our division has already been doing a lot of wonderful things, and there was a desire to do more on a larger scale. OT has the power to positively influence the health and wellness of the entire world and be applied in really powerful and culturally relevant ways. At USC, we have the ability, the capacity and also the responsibility to be part of building OT's presence globally.

**What does Global Initiatives currently do to expand the division's global reach?**

While we're still in the beginning stages, the program was formed with two prongs. First is outreach. We want to expand our collaborative relationships with the global OT community of clinicians, researchers, educators and students. Secondly, we realize we have the world here at USC. We've had students from 46 different countries, and we want to find ways to nurture their unique needs.

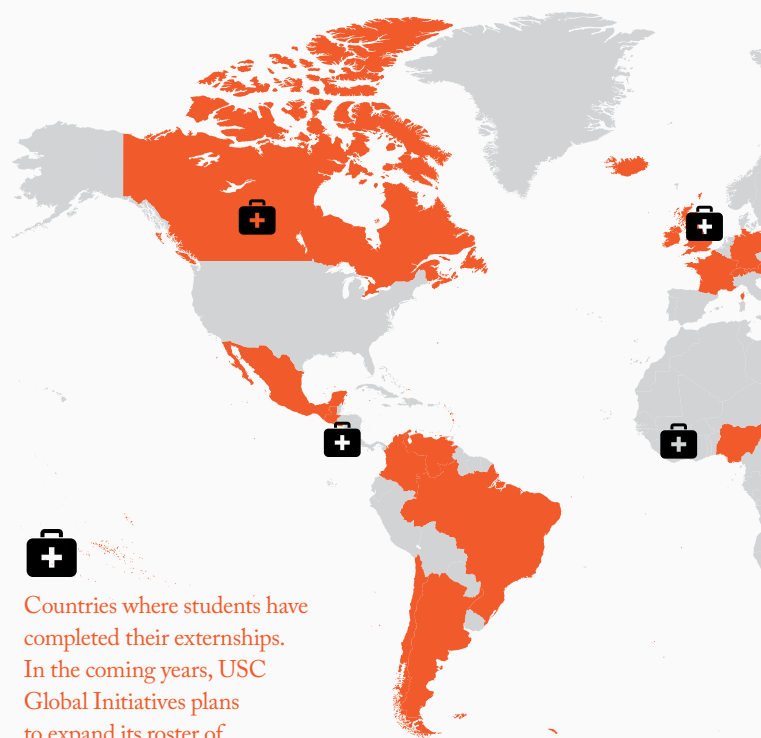
**What events and programs have you hosted over the past year?**

We hosted several international visitors under the banner of Global Initiatives, including professors from England and South Korea, to present research and look for potential collaborations at USC.

Since many of our students want to work in the United States, we hosted panel discussions with alumni and a supervisor from the OT national licensing body so students could learn the next steps after graduation, like sitting for the licensing exam, finding a job and learning how to establish themselves as new clinicians.

We also held the first USC Summer Occupational Therapy Immersion program with 11 students from seven different countries: South Korea, Japan, Venezuela, Norway, Mexico, Taiwan and Colombia. The program offers a four-week continuing education workshop designed for international OT students and therapists who have some interest in studying or working in the United States. Students were introduced to occupational therapy in America and occupational science, which is a

## Our Global Footprint



Countries where students have completed their externships. In the coming years, USC Global Initiatives plans to expand its roster of international fieldwork locales.



discipline founded at USC. It was also a chance for students to improve their English skills.

We're going to be doing it again next summer, and we're hoping to expand it.

**What does the future hold in the short-term for the division's international presence and capacity to foster international relationships?**

Right now, we're developing a new student exchange program. This would be a two-week experience where we send four to eight of our students to a partner university for an academic cultural exchange program. And we would welcome a team of their students to USC. The program would be a chance for students to experience OT in a different country and take classes at the host institution.

We're also looking to expand our international fieldwork opportunities and build more relationships with universities. We want to send our students overseas to do their clinical fieldwork and also welcome international students here.

We're continuing to explore and build partnerships with universities around the world, including in Mexico, South America and Asia, and establishing opportunities for visiting faculty members and research collaborations.

**What about the division's long-term goals?**

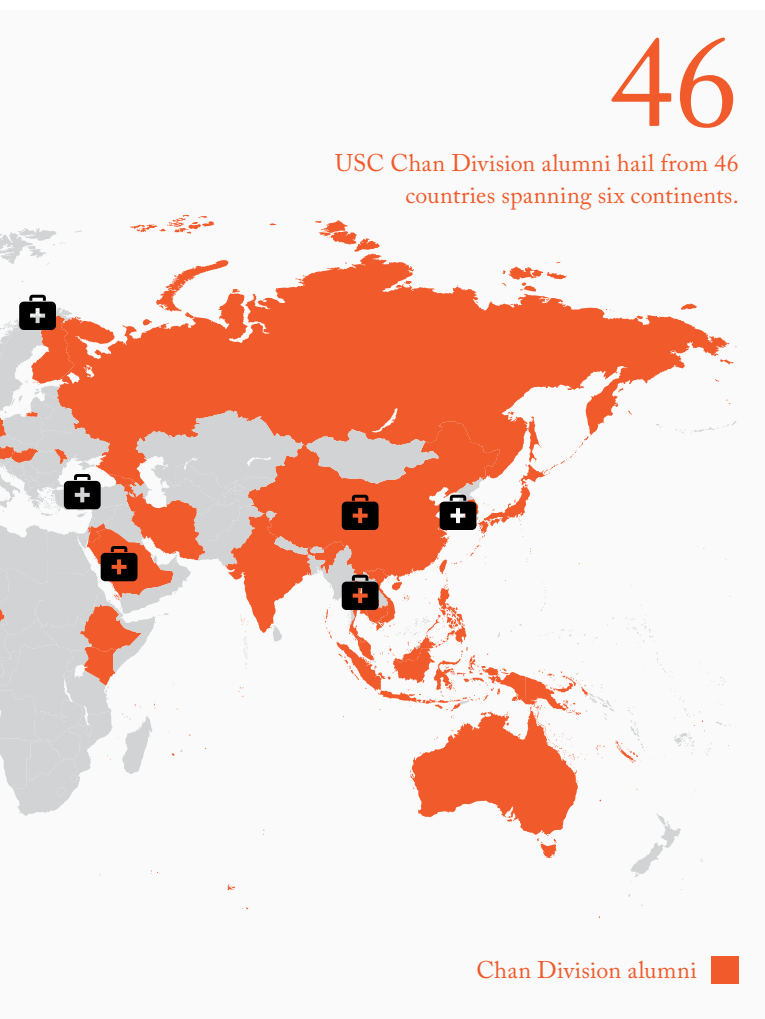
We're looking at more distance-learning possibilities. We're looking at technology platforms where classrooms around the world can simultaneously take the same course, taught by the same group of professors.

We're also interested in developing different online programs, including a master's degree, and we're hoping to develop an online doctorate of occupational therapy program. These programs just open the door to a lot of international students.

We're looking to build a really robust international hub at USC where we have a constant flow of visiting scholars and students, and we're sending our people overseas where partnerships and collaborations form.

**USC enrolls the largest percentage of international students of any university in the country. What makes the university so attractive to international students?**

Our division has amazing resources, including more than 100 full-time faculty and staff. We have the space and infrastructure for research—even the sheer number of students we have enables us to pursue things like this \$20 million gift. I can't think of another OT program in the world that would have the ability to cultivate that kind of gift.



Assistant professors of clinical occupational therapy Adley Chan '07, MA '08, OTD '12 (left) and Danny Park MA '09, OTD '10 are the program directors of the USC Global Initiatives program.

PHOTO BY JOHN SKALICKY



# Group Think

An interdisciplinary program representing occupational therapy, pediatrics, engineering, creative technologies and cinematic arts at USC will improve the lives of children with autism spectrum disorder.

**BY FLORENCE CLARK PHD '82, OTR/L, FAOTA**

ASSOCIATE DEAN OF THE USC CHAN DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL  
SCIENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY





In the not-too-distant past, autism was a little understood and rarely diagnosed neurodevelopmental disorder. As you probably know, today the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at 1 in 68 children in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, occupational therapists working with this population have an intimate understanding of the daily challenges faced—and successes achieved—by people with ASD and their families, friends and communities.

Here at the USC Chan Division, we certainly know that research-based institutions play a vital role in advancing the scientific understanding of the disorder and in improving the quality, responsiveness and availability of services for the population. In fact, the study and treatment of autism has been a component of our mission for more than five decades dating back to the pioneering work of A. Jean Ayres in the 1960s. Our division's Sensory Integration, Engagement and Family Life Initiative is comprised of faculty members whose collective mission is to facilitate and expand interdisciplinary translational research initiatives designed to improve the development, well-being and participation of people with autism.

Today, USC is home to a substantial community of scientists who are engaged in ASD-related research and treatment, and we are central players on a Trojan team that is exponentially growing. USC and its affiliated Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) have developed community-based clinics that bring more families with autistic children through our doors than any other institution in the Los Angeles basin. Coupled with the Boone Fetter and USC University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disability clinics housed at CHLA, Trojans treat thousands of children with neurodevelopmental disorders—with the largest proportion of patients in all clinics having been diagnosed with ASD.

We have seen how USC's unique position has unequivocally improved the lives of countless individuals. But we know that more work still lies ahead. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee, approximately \$1.5 billion of public and private funding has been dedicated to research on autism spectrum disorders over the past five years.<sup>2</sup>

With our top-ranked schools of engineering and cinematic arts, the nation's No. 1-ranked occupational therapy program and a clinical partnership with one of the country's leading children's hospitals, USC is bringing to bear expertise from multiple disciplines on a neurodevelopmental disorder affecting millions of children, adolescents, adults and their families. USC researchers and clinicians have a long and strong history of collaboration and a spirit of cooperation that will enable us to leverage our remarkable research and clinical talent and catalyze our efforts to transform the lives of individuals living with autism.

To that end, a select group of scientists from academic units across the university recently convened to spearhead a new effort to formally launch just such an interdisciplinary venture. At the table were faculty members from the USC Chan Division, the pediatrics department from the Keck School of Medicine of USC, the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, the USC School of Cinematic Arts and the USC Institute for Creative Technologies—a cohort similar to the one assembled at the division's 2012 occupational science symposium on autism in everyday life. Also at the lunch were stakeholders from community clinics and non-profit organizations, other clinicians and people who have autism themselves.

At this lunch we discussed our hopes and dreams for what will one day soon be realized as the USC Center for Children and Families Living with Autism. Colloquially known as the "USC Autism Center," this endeavor will ensure that children, adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders and their families truly thrive—reaching



**THE ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IS 1 IN 68 CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES.**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**\$1.5  
BILLION**

**PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING HAS BEEN DEDICATED TO RESEARCH ON AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS.**

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee

their greatest potential and experiencing optimal quality of life through their engagements and participation.

Through research, training, education and community partnership programs, the USC Autism Center will develop best practices for creating, implementing and disseminating novel therapeutic and enrichment strategies that engage children, adolescents and adults with ASD. It will focus on developing a cross-disciplinary basic and translational research agenda shaped in collaboration with a network of people living with ASD. This alliance, we believe, will unify the very best talents of our academic community with the expertise of the ASD community to foster a generation of efficacious solutions to real-world, urgent and frequent dilemmas.

Together, these engagements will magnify the voices of the ASD community as their expressed concerns and expertise will richly inform and guide efforts at USC. This international-level, highly innovative research, treatment and life-transition program will leap beyond traditional research-based approaches to more rapidly enrich the quality of life for individuals with ASD and their families.

Special thanks to Pat Levitt, provost professor of neuroscience, pharmacy, psychiatry, pediatrics and psychology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and USC School of Pharmacy, and Mary Lawlor, associate chair of research and professor at the USC Chan Division and Keck School, for contributing to the white paper introducing the USC Autism Center.

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# In Print

**Stanley Azen** co-authored “Apriori Feasibility Testing of Randomized Clinical Trial Design in Patients with Cleft Deformities and Class III Malocclusion” in the *International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology*.

**Erna Blanche** and **Sharon Cermak** were among the co-authors of “Sensory Integration Functions of Children With Cochlear Implants” published in the September/October issue of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. Alumnae **AnjaLi Carrasco Koester OTD ’13**, **Zoe Mailloux ’77, MA ’81, OTD ’12**, **Gina Geppert Coleman MA ’85** and **Annie Baltazar Mori MA ’00, OTD ’03** were also co-authors.

**Stefanie Bodison** was a member of the American Occupational Therapy Association’s Commission on Practice committee, which compiled the third version of the “Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process.” The document was published in the March/April edition of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*.

Faculty members **Mike Carlson**, **Jess Holguin**, **Cheryl Vigen**, **Stanley Azen** and **Florence Clark**, alongside staff members **Jeanine Blanchard** and **Sarah Gleason**, coauthored “Predictors of Retention Among African American and Hispanic Older Adult Research Participants in the Well Elderly 2 Randomized Controlled Trial” in the *Journal of Applied Gerontology*. The article was co-authored with alumnae **Jeanne Jackson MA ’86, PhD ’95**, **Deborah Mandel MA ’95, OTD ’10** and **Abbey Marterella PhD ’10**.

**Erna Blanche** was the lead author of “Development of an Adult Sensory Processing Scale (ASPS)” published in the September/October issue of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. Alumnae **Diane Parham MA ’81** and **Megan Chang MA ’01, PhD ’09** were co-authors.

Professor **Sharon Cermak** and T32 postdoctoral fellow **Leah Stein**, along with an interdisciplinary team of USC researchers, co-authored “Physiological and Behavioral Stress and Anxiety in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders During Routine Oral Care” published in *BioMed Research International*.

**Susanne Smith Roley** and **Sharon Cermak** were co-authors of “Modification of the Postrotary Nystagmus Test for Evaluating Young Children” published in the September/October issue of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. Alumnae **Zoe Mailloux ’77, MA ’81, OTD ’12**, **Tracy Ann Becerra ’05**, **Annie Baltazar Mori MA ’00, OTD ’03** and **Nicole Buss MA ’08, OTD ’10** were also co-authors.

Faculty members **Florence Clark**, **Elizabeth Pyatak**, **Mike Carlson**, **Erna Blanche**, **Cheryl Vigen**, **Jesús Díaz** and **Stanley Azen**, along with staff member **Jeanine Blanchard** and PhD student **Lucia Florindez ’18**, co-authored “Implementing Trials of Complex Interventions in Community Settings: The USC-Rancho Los Amigos Pressure Ulcer Prevention Study (PUPS).” The article was published in *Clinical Trials*. Alumna **Michal Atkins MA ’89** was also a co-author.

(Continued on page 26)



**Sharon Cermak** and **Julie Bissell** authored “Content and Construct Validity of Here’s How I Write (HHIW): A Child’s Self-Assessment and Goal Setting Tool” in the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. Co-authored by Cermak and Bissell, HHIW is a criterion-referenced handwriting assessment with standardized administration procedures designed for children between second and fifth grade. The assessment uses 24 picture cards to examine school children’s perception of their own handwriting skills. In the first study described—a content validity test—40 occupational therapists were consulted to evaluate test items, the results of which support test content and indicate freedom from cultural and gender biases. In the second study—a construct validity test—the HHIW scores of 20 children who self-reported poor handwriting and 20 who self-reported good handwriting were compared to teacher feedback. Results revealed statistically significant differences between the HHIW scores of both cohorts. Interestingly, while children with poor handwriting rated themselves lower than those with good handwriting, their teachers rated them even more poorly than they rated themselves. These studies show that children in second to fifth grade are indeed able to accurately assess their own handwriting, and that HHIW can be a valuable tool to facilitate partnership between teachers, occupational therapists and children to better understand how to improve handwriting.





FUTURE

# GenNext

## Clarissa Tu MA '14, OTD '15 Occupational Therapy

### HOMETOWN

Monterey Park, Calif.

### UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Double major in psychology and social welfare from University of California–Berkeley

### OT AREAS OF INTEREST

Pediatric physical rehabilitation

### MEANINGFUL OCCUPATIONS

Photography, connecting with my inner kid at Disneyland, spending quality time with my family and friends, thinking about life, traveling, reading and running

### YOUR GUILTY PLEASURES

Eating chocolate, counting Facebook likes and taking a ridiculous amount of pictures

### BEST PART OF AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CAREER

Witnessing clients develop skills for independence and activity participation

### AND THE WORST PART

It's difficult for OT—a holistic profession that believes in the healing properties of meaningful activities—to meet its potential in a world where health care is dominated by the medical model.

## You took the proverbial “gap year” between your undergraduate and graduate studies. How did you pass the time?

I backpacked throughout Europe. When I came home, I worked as a social worker assistant at a senior center, volunteered in an OT outpatient hands clinic, took prerequisites and applied to OT school.

## What was it about occupational therapy that really appealed to you?

It's fulfilling, incorporates my values of both physical and mental well-being and will always challenge me to grow. The stability of the career is also attractive.

## This past summer you spent two weeks in Ghana to educate local community-based rehabilitation university students about OT. What's your best memory from the trip?

While we were there, we stayed at a school for children with disabilities. We conducted activities with them to determine the vocation that best matches their skills. My best memory was with one of my assigned kids, Francis. He wasn't verbal before, but a few days before the end of the trip, we had a vocal exchange where we repeated each other's name. It made me so happy!

## What's one of the most valuable life lessons you've learned?

There is more to a person than what they present to you. Everyone has a story, and it is worthwhile to listen and learn.

## Who are some of your role models?

Taylor Swift. She doggedly chased her dreams and, after experiencing success, remains humble. Even though she works hard, she makes time for her awesome occupations of needlepoint and baking. Also, every USC OT faculty member is a role model because I admire their depth of knowledge, the confidence and eloquence in their presentation and their fervent passion for the profession.

## What would you like your impact to be on occupational therapy?

I passionately believe in the value of OT and would love to help my profession grow. By making OT a stronger profession, I would help more people participate in meaningful activities, thereby making the world a more enjoyable place for many individuals.

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*“There is more to a person than what they present to you. Everyone has a story, and it is worthwhile to listen and learn.”*

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# In Print

(Continued from page 24)

**Florence Clark** co-authored “Diurnal Patterns and Associations Among Salivary Cortisol, DHEA and Alpha-Amylase in Older Adults” published in *Physiology & Behavior*.

**Camille Dieterle**, **Chantelle Rice** and **Katie Jordan**, along with two additional USC researchers, authored “Decision-Making, Sensitivity to Reward and Attrition in Weight Management” published in *Obesity*.

T32 postdoctoral fellow **Valerie Hill** was the lead author of “Relationship between Touch Sensation of the Affected Hand and Performance of Valued Activities in Individuals with Chronic Stroke” published in *Topics in Stroke Rehabilitation*.

**Mary Lawlor** and **Cheryl Mattingly** co-authored the chapter “Family Perspectives on Occupation, Health, and Disability” in the 12th edition of *Willard & Spackman's Occupational Therapy* published by Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

**Natalie Leland** and **Stacey Schepens Niemiec** published “What is Occupational Therapy’s Role in Addressing Sleep Problems among Older Adults?” in *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health*. Alumni **Kaivalya Kelkar MA ’13** and **Don Fogelberg PhD ’08** were also authors.

**Elizabeth Pyatak ’02, MA ’04, PhD ’10** and staff member **Daniella Florindez** co-authored “‘We Are All Gonna Get Diabetic These Days:’ The Impact of a Living Legacy of Type 2 Diabetes on Hispanic Young Adults’ Diabetes Care” published in *The Diabetes Educator*.

**Elizabeth Pyatak** and **Cheryl Vigen** were co-authors of “Challenges Contributing to Disrupted Transition from Pediatric to Adult Diabetes Care in Young Adults with Type 1 Diabetes” published in *Diabetic Medicine*.

**Stacey Schepens Niemiec** co-authored “Aging, Fatigue, and Fatigability: Implications for Occupational and Physical Therapists” published in *Current Geriatrics Reports*.

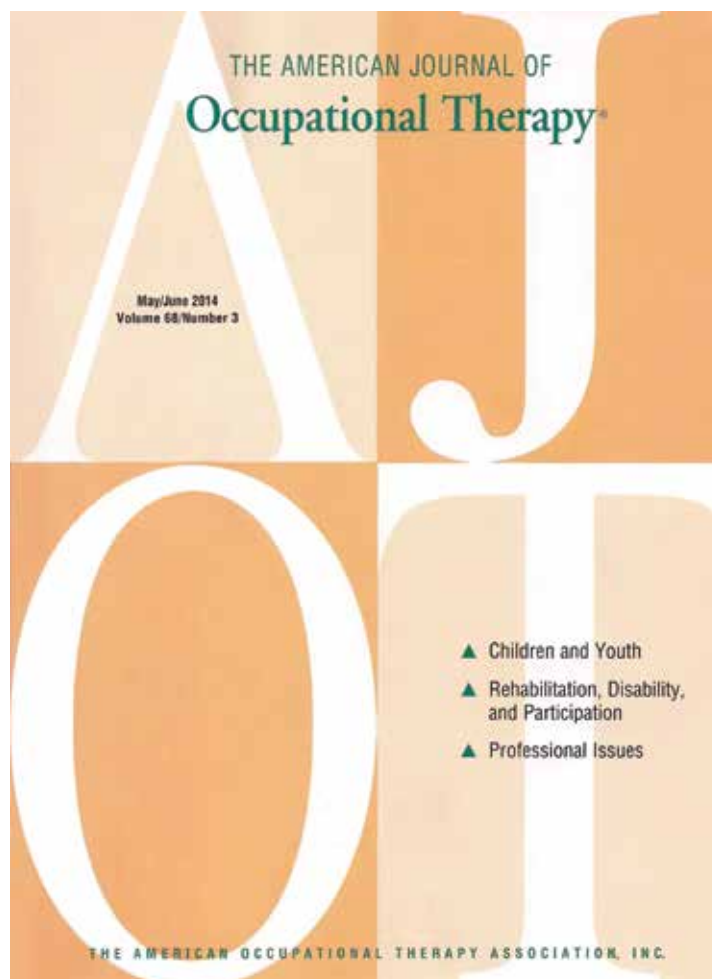
**Rachel Proffitt** was the lead author of “Low-Cost Virtual Reality and Game-Based Technologies in Rehabilitation” published in the *AOTA Technology Special Interest Section Quarterly*.

**Rachel Proffitt** also authored “A Virtual Reality Approach to Lower Extremity Rehab” published in *ler: Lower Extremity Review*.

Assistant Professor **Olga Solomon** and occupational science doctorate student **Amber Angell** co-authored “The Social Life of Health Records: Understanding Families’ Experiences of Autism,” published in *Social Science & Medicine*.

**Cheryl Vigen** was a co-author of “Obesity and Mortality After Breast Cancer by Race/Ethnicity: The California Breast Cancer Survivorship Consortium” published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

Read more online at [chan.usc.edu/research/faculty-publications](http://chan.usc.edu/research/faculty-publications).



Occupational science doctorate student **Alison M. Cogan MA ’12, PhD ’17** authored “Supporting Our Military Families: A Case for a Larger Role for Occupational Therapy in Prevention and Mental Health Care” in the July/August issue of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. In the article, Cogan makes the case for occupational therapists to be key players on the medical and preventive health care teams serving military service members. With occupational therapy intervention, veterans and their families can tailor daily activities and established routines to optimize health and wellness, she says. Cogan also published “Occupational Needs and Intervention Strategies for Military Personnel with Mild Traumatic Brain Injury and Persistent Post-Concussion Symptoms: A Review” in the summer issue of *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health*.





*Phillip D. Shannon MA '66, MPA '74 OTR, FAOTA*

## IN MEMORIAM

Phillip D. Shannon MA '66, MPA '74, OTR, FAOTA of McAllen, Texas died June 23, of cancer, at the age of 77. Shannon received his master of arts in occupational therapy and master of public administration degrees from USC and established a career of educational and professional leadership with national prominence.

Early in his career, Shannon entered the U.S. Army as an occupational therapist. He was named assistant chief and later chief of occupational therapy at Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco, Walter Reed General Hospital and Valley Forge General Hospital in Phoenixville, Penn. He was ultimately named chief of the occupational therapy branch at the Academy of Health Sciences on Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, ascending to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the army medical specialist corps.

Following his military retirement, Shannon served as chair of the department of occupational therapy at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo. In 1985, he was appointed associate dean of the School of Health Related Professions at SUNY Buffalo.

Throughout his career, he published many articles in journals and textbooks delineating the occupational behavior perspective, including topics of work adjustment and the adolescent soldier, adolescent experiences, occupational choice and decision-making, work-play model in psychiatry, work-play theory, the "derailment" of occupational therapy and the philosophical values of occupational therapy. He was instrumental in advancing the occupational behavior frame of reference pioneered by former USC faculty member Mary Reilly.

Shannon served on various committees and editorial boards and was an active presenter at state, national and international conferences. He was named a Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association in 1977 and received several merit awards from SUNY Buffalo. Throughout the early 1980s, he was director of AOTA's project to define the philosophical base of occupational therapy. He was appointed director of the project for the study and implementation of occupational behavior in the army and was chair of the certification examination committee of the American Occupational Therapy Certification Board. Shannon's many honors include receiving the U.S. Army Meritorious Service Medal and Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster.

Phil was preceded in death by Merry Ellen Shannon, his wife of 59 years. He is survived by his son Mike Shannon and daughter Kelly Shannon.

*Obituary courtesy of Linda Florey MA '68, PhD '98*



## CLASS NOTES

Assistant Clinical Professor **Sarah Bream MA '96, OTD '09** received the 2014 Award of Appreciation from the Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC).

**Akemi Davies MA '05** chaired OTAC's 2014 Conference Committee.

Assistant Clinical Professor **Celso Delgado Jr. MA '05, OTD '10** was named director-elect of OTAC Region 2.

**Aaron Eakman PhD '07** received a 2014 American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF) Leadership Service Commendation.

Alumnae **Dottie M. Ecker MA '68** and **Susan H. Knox MA '68, PhD '97** were named co-recipients of AOTF's 2014 A. Jean Ayres Award.

**Anne Henderson '46** celebrated her 90th birthday at an October celebration in Needham, Mass., with several USC faculty members in attendance.

**Esther Huecker MA '93, PhD '05** received an AOTA 2014 Retired Educator Award.

Alumnae **Beth Larson PhD '96** and **JoAnne Wright PhD '95** were both named to the AOTA Roster of Fellows.

**Diane Mayfield MA '98** received the 2014 OTAC Fieldwork Educator Award.

**Mindi (Huth) Monty '93** and Scott Monty welcomed a daughter, Grace Catherine. She joins brothers William Scott, 10, and Drew Allan, 7.

**Terri Nishimura MA '85** received the 2014 OTAC OT Entrepreneur Award.

Board of Councilors member **Shawn Phipps BS '97** received the 2014 OTAC Award of Excellence.



VOICES

# A Deeper Meaning

Each issue, we invite someone from the division to share with the Trojan Family the inspirations behind daily life. This issue, director of admissions Liz Carley talks about finding the perfect career and describing the deep satisfaction she gets from giving back, both on- and off-campus.

BY LIZ CARLEY '04, MA '05, OTD '06

I had never heard of occupational therapy until I was an undergraduate student at USC. I knew I was looking for a career in which I could help other people, but I hadn't yet found the best way of doing that.

During my sophomore year at USC, somebody came into one of my classes to give a presentation about the profession. I remember thinking, "This is a miracle!" as I discovered that occupational therapy was a combination of health care, education, sociology and psychology—all fields I was considering pursuing. And I just so happened to find myself at the No. 1 school in the country for it! After some more investigating, no other profession seemed quite as complete as the holistic perspective of occupational therapy.

I have a specific passion for working with underserved, low-income youth in inner cities and a passion for fighting for equality, in general. I believe in making things better for others. Growing up, I knew that I was very lucky—I was fortunate to come from the circumstances that I did. But I went to a large, inner-city high school in Seattle, which was really where I was first exposed to the realities of inequality. During college, I became very involved with community outreach groups, alternative spring break projects and volunteer opportunities at homeless shelters—doing what I felt I could to make a difference in the lives of others.

After finishing my occupational therapy degree at USC, I went to work at the Occupational Therapy Training Program in Torrance, Calif., a non-profit, community-based agency providing a range of mental health services to help young people and their families thrive. For eight years, I provided those types of services to the populations I always wanted to work with.

In fact, I still work at OTTP on Tuesday evenings, helping to run a 20-week family program called "The LIFE Program." It's a group specifically geared toward parenting adolescents; parents and their kids split off into separate groups, based on their ages, and in the end, the whole family comes back together to apply what they've learned and to work together to improve their relationships with each other.

One of our biggest success stories was a student I worked with who had multiple barriers—a mother who was incarcerated and a father who passed away—and had been in the foster care system. He was acting out in school, but his behaviors were really symptoms of a history of trauma and depression. He went through some of our programs at OTTP and ended up being accepted into a community college in Northern California, at a residential campus where he could live in the dorms.

He did really well there! He created a whole new life for himself apart from the neighborhood and the life circumstances from which he came. It's really incredible to realize how the neighborhoods and families that we come from affect us so deeply, and how, as occupational therapists, we account for these environments and social systems when helping our

clients build a plan for action and success.

I love my new position as director of admissions here at the division. And because I haven't completely stopped working with underserved youths and families, it's nice to tell prospective students, "I actually am still a practicing OT!"

I am so appreciative that this profession found me, and I found it. And I am so excited that I get to "pay it forward" on a daily basis, to help others who are starting along a path in this career that will hopefully be as fulfilling as mine has been. Whether out in the community or in my office here at USC, I love being able to help people make positive changes in their own lives.



PHOTO BY JOHN SKALICKY

Liz Carley '04, MA '05, OTD '06



# Donor Honor Roll

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